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THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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PUBLICITY RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF MUSICAL ARTS

On Sunday, April 25 at 8:30 p.m. the Department of Musical Arts of the Cleveland Museum of Art will present a concert by the New York Jazz Repertory Company with Billy Taylor in the Gartner Auditorium of the Museum.

The New York Jazz Repertory Company first appeared on the scene in January of 1974 with a series at Carnegie Hall. The company's first season was a series of concerts, each of which contained two or three segments concentrating on different types of jazz. During its second season, programs devoted to great jazz figures of the 20's, 30's and 40's, such as Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington. In a November, 1974 edition of the New York Times, George Wein explained the purpose of the company: "This is the first company that has been founded to play the history of Jazz, to maintain the music as a living thing. In the past couple of years we've seen ragtime become part of the culture when it was supposedly dead. The same thing can happen to jazz of any era. It can come back overnight. New Orleans jazz, Dixieland, swing--all these musics will be heard again. But will they be heard as museum pieces or as living music?"

In a May 2, 1975 edition of The Washington Post, George Wein stated "The concept of the repertory company is to create and relate to the concepts of the great people in jazz. The idea is to keep the music of great artists alive. It shows the music doesn't have to die, and it doesn't have to be played on records... it's a form of classicizing jazz. The music can be played like Bach and Beethoven, it can't be played like Louis Armstrong played. We've done concerts devoted to

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the music of Charlie Parker, Thelonius Monk, Jimmie Lunceford, Count Basie, Quincy Jones, Duke Ellington...this is a way of preserving the heritage. And contrary to what some people think, jazz isn't dying--the jazz heritage is dying. So we're trying to do our part to keep the heritage alive."

By the summer of 1975 the New York Jazz Repertory Company had indeed helped to keep this heritage alive, not just in the United States but internationally as well. In the summer of 1975, in conjunction with the United States Department of State, the company did a 5-city, 23-concert tour of the Soviet Union upon request of the Russian government, bringing an integral part of American culture to the Soviets. In the fall of 1975, the company toured Europe in addition to releasing an album of the music of Louis Armstrong.

They have opened the Newport Jazz Festival in New York almost every summer for a number of years. This summer will be no exception when they will be playing four concerts devoted to the music of Duke Ellington. Leading the company is emcee Billy Taylor, known to just about everyone from his years on the David Frost Show, his national tours with the Jazz mobile, and as a top jazz pianist, composer, and scholar.

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